



# 2020 Marketing and Recruitment Practices for Undergraduate Students

Effective practices for undergraduate recruitment  
at four-year colleges and universities, as rated by  
campus officials from 151 institutions



ENROLLMENT

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## FIVE KEY FINDINGS FROM THIS YEAR'S DATA

This year's *Marketing and Recruitment Practices Report* covers a wide range of campus activities. They show that more campuses are embracing digital strategies and practices—which are even more important in today's pandemic environment. But they also illustrate that campuses may be missing key opportunities for engagement and enrollment—with transfer students, underrepresented students, and the biggest enrollment influencers of all, parents.

### TOP 3 MOST EFFECTIVE OUTREACH STRATEGIES

#### PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

<b>100%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>98%</b>
Text messaging	Mobile-responsive website	In-person meetings

#### PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Email communications	Mobile-responsive website	Text messaging

### TOP 3 MOST EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING STRATEGIES

#### PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

<b>97%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>91%</b>
Online display advertising	Social media advertising	Re-targeted ads

#### PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

<b>98%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>97%</b>
Online display advertising	Search engine optimization	Re-targeted ads

### TOP 3 MOST USED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

#### PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

<b>93%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>86%</b>
Leveraging analytics	CRM	Search engine optimization

#### PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

<b>94%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>88%</b>
CRM	Leveraging analytics	Search engine optimization

### INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES FOR:

#### Hispanic students

<b>31%</b>	<b>56%</b>
PRIVATE	PUBLIC

#### African American students

<b>29%</b>	<b>55%</b>
PRIVATE	PUBLIC

#### First-generation students

<b>34%</b>	<b>26%</b>
PRIVATE	PUBLIC

### INSTITUTIONS THAT PURCHASE TRANSFER STUDENT NAMES

	<b>49%</b>		<b>41%</b>
PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC

### INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE WEBSITE/WEBSITE AREA FOR PARENTS

	<b>28%</b>		<b>53%</b>
PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PUBLIC

#### ABOUT THIS STUDY

**151** U.S. campuses polled | **95** four-year private | **56** four-year public

Poll conducted fall 2020 See p. 24 for a list of participating institutions

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SEARCH PRACTICES

### Number of high school student names purchased

Approximate number of high school student names purchased for marketing campaigns to generate inquiries and applicants.

NAMES PURCHASED	PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
Fewer than 50,000	34%	28%
50,000–100,000	24%	44%
100,001–125,000	15%	9%
125,001–150,000	8%	4%
150,001–200,000	9%	6%
200,001–350,000	7%	9%
More than 350,000	2%	0%

### Purchased high school names by high school grade level.

Number of institutions that purchase names from these grade levels.

GRADE LEVEL	PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
Prior to 10th grade	10%	4%
10th grade	73%	72%
11th grade	100%	100%
12th grade	98%	93%

### Percentage of purchased high school student names that receive direct mail

NUMBER RECEIVING MAIL	PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
Fewer than 25%	33%	32%
26%–50%	23%	13%
51%–75%	20%	15%
All of them	23%	40%

## Preferred methods for first and subsequent contacts with high school purchased names

These results show comparisons to the 2018 report (respondents were able to select all contact methods that applied).

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	FIRST CONTACT METHODS	
	2018	2020
Email message	81%	100%
Email message with link to a personalized URL	37%	45%
Digital advertising	30%	59%
Self-mailer brochure or postcard	53%	40%
Outbound phone call to all or a selected subset	19%	29%
Text message	1%	12%
Video (whether delivered digitally or via email)	N/A	25%

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	SUBSEQUENT CONTACT METHODS	
	2018	2020
Email message	83%	100%
Email message with link to a personalized URL	31%	43%
Digital advertising	50%	72%
Self-mailer brochure or postcard	36%	45%
Outbound phone call to all or a selected subset	44%	76%
Text message	20%	81%
Video (whether delivered digitally or via email)	N/A	60%

Note: in 2018 we did not ask if institutions sent video to students. We did ask if they sent a letter or view book to students in 2018, but did not ask that in 2020.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	FIRST CONTACT METHODS	
	2018	2020
Email message	74%	100%
Email message with link to a personalized URL	30%	53%
Digital advertising	38%	42%
Self-mailer brochure or postcard	47%	30%
Outbound phone call to all or a selected subset	19%	5%
Text message	0%	14%
Video (whether delivered digitally or via email)	N/A	19%

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	SUBSEQUENT CONTACT METHODS	
	2018	2020
Email message	83%	93%
Email message with link to a personalized URL	28%	54%
Digital advertising	40%	82%
Self-mailer brochure or postcard	43%	71%
Outbound phone call to all or a selected subset	30%	68%
Text message	23%	100%
Video (whether delivered digitally or via email)	N/A	89%

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Digital engagement has become increasingly vital for student recruitment in the last two years. Texting, video, and digital advertising all have seen widespread use, especially for subsequent contacts with students. Institutions need to continue to optimize their outreach to reach students online and through their mobile devices.

Personalized outreach is also critical, and nearly half of all institutions are missing an opportunity to make a personalized connection with students by not using email messages with links to personalized URLs. This allows for personalized content (including personalized video) that can resonate with students and move them further into the funnel.

Outbound calling is another strategy more institutions should consider. With nearly all students owning a cell phone, it's easier than ever to reach them via phone. Make sure your campus has features such as visual caller ID so institutions can see that your institution is calling, making them more likely to pick up.

## TRANSFER STUDENT SEARCH PRACTICES

### Number of institutions that purchase names of transfer students



### Preferred methods for first and subsequent contacts with college students purchased names

Respondents were able to select all contact methods that applied.

INSTITUTION TYPE	FIRST CONTACT	SUBSEQUENT
	100%	100%
Email message	100%	100%
Digital advertising	45%	61%
Email message with link to a personalized URL	45%	51%
Outbound phone call to all or a selected subset	29%	88%
Text message	25%	90%
Business reply direct mail	28%	33%
Video (whether delivered digitally or via email)	22%	41%
INSTITUTION TYPE	FIRST CONTACT	SUBSEQUENT
	100%	100%
Email message	100%	100%
Digital advertising	41%	90%
Email message with link to a personalized URL	62%	71%
Outbound phone call to all or a selected subset	5%	90%
Text message	14%	100%
Business reply direct mail	14%	71%
Video (whether delivered digitally or via email)	8%	71%

### KEY TAKEAWAY

More institutions should incorporate personalized URLs into their transfer student recruitment strategies. Given the shorter decision process of transfer students compared to traditional students, the more you can quickly connect them to the specific resources they need, the more likely you are to engage them and push them toward choosing your institution.

## TOP 10 MOST EFFECTIVE OUTREACH STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FOR RECRUITMENT/MARKETING

We asked respondents to rate 17 outreach strategies for recruitment and marketing. The following are the **10 most effective strategies** and how they compare to our 2018 results.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	2018		2020	
	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Text messaging	81%	98%	93%	100%
Mobile responsive website	90%	97%	92%	99%
In-person meetings (on- and off- campus)	99%	100%	98%	98%
Social media	99%	88%	98%	97%
Publications (student marketing search pieces, view book, etc.)	100%	89%	90%	96%
Email communications	100%	93%	100%	96%
Videos embedded on your website	89%	94%	96%	95%
Video calls	41%	72%	65%	93%
Digital advertising	94%	86%	91%	93%
Virtual tours	63%	77%	92%	89%

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	2018		2020	
	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Email communications	98%	93%	100%	100%
Mobile responsive website	91%	95%	90%	100%
Text messaging	60%	96%	86%	100%
Videos embedded on your website	83%	97%	98%	98%
Virtual tours	60%	75%	98%	98%
In-person meetings (on and off campus)	98%	100%	98%	98%
Digital advertising	91%	95%	96%	98%
Online chat	51%	75%	73%	97%
Publications (student marketing search pieces, view book, etc.)	98%	93%	98%	96%
Social media	98%	87%	98%	96%

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Align your digital strategies with student behaviors. For instance, nearly all institutions use social media—which is terrific—but are you focusing on the social media channels that are most effective for recruitment? Or posting the most engaging content?

Similarly, use the digital advertising techniques that are most likely to resonate with students. Look at how you can customize and personalize your advertising to match what students are searching for, where they live, and other identifiers that can make your messages more targeted.

Text messaging should be used by all institutions as a recruitment tool. The advances in P2P texting make it easier than ever to send personalized texts to students about key deadlines, reminders, and other messages that can trigger response.

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## ADVERTISING STRATEGIES

We measured nine advertising strategies listed below along with the percentage of institutions using these practices and their perceived effectiveness.

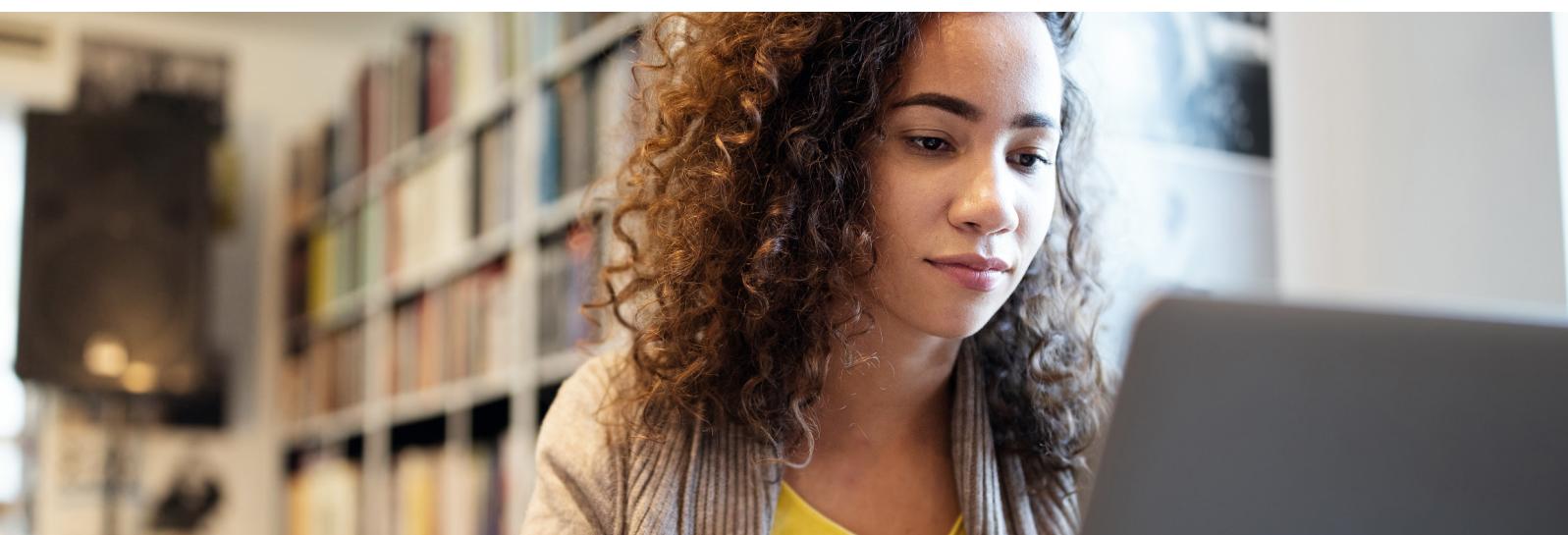
ADVERTISING STRATEGIES: PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	2018		2020	
	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Online display advertising	91%	91%	89%	97%
Social media advertising	87%	90%	99%	94%
Re-targeted ads that appear on other websites after students visit your campus website	81%	89%	84%	91%
Search engine marketing (such as Google advertising)	74%	85%	90%	91%
Video advertising (YouTube, Streaming TV)	N/A	N/A	62%	88%
Television ads	40%	61%	29%	79%
Billboard, bus, or other outdoor advertising	69%	50%	51%	71%
Print media ads	84%	46%	71%	62%
Radio ads	66%	48%	61%	60%

ADVERTISING STRATEGIES: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	2018		2020	
	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Online display advertising	84%	89%	90%	98%
Search engine marketing (such as Google advertising)	67%	87%	88%	98%
Re-targeted ads that appear on other websites after students visit your campus website	71%	91%	81%	97%
Social media advertising	78%	86%	96%	96%
Video advertising (YouTube, Streaming TV)	N/A	N/A	73%	94%
Television ads	48%	64%	63%	80%
Billboard, bus, or other outdoor advertising	62%	64%	79%	79%
Print media ads	87%	65%	79%	76%
Radio ads	67%	53%	65%	71%

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Institutions need to really gauge their ROI on the advertising spends. Many of the respondents are using traditional advertising such as TV, print, and outdoor ads. While these can help build awareness, it can also be difficult to measure their effectiveness.

Similarly, digital lead generation is not only fully trackable, but also reaches students on the devices they use every day. Techniques such as search engine marketing, digital display, and re-targeting should be used and continuously optimized by all campuses.



## DIGITAL ADVERTISING

In a new question for 2020, we dove into more detail about which digital channels campuses use and the calls to action they include.

### Digital advertising channels leveraged for targeting search name purchases

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Instagram	55%	91%
Display/Banner (i.e.: Google Ads)	79%	89%
Facebook	56%	89%
YouTube	64%	78%
Snapchat	83%	60%
Twitter	87%	58%

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Display/Banner (i.e.: Google Ads)	81%	100%
Snapchat	50%	100%
Facebook	51%	98%
YouTube	52%	97%
Instagram	53%	94%
Twitter	57%	88%

## Calls to action

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Promoting virtual or on-campus events	90%	96%
Promoting application and enrollment deadlines	88%	91%
Major, program, or department specific messaging	83%	91%
Brand messaging	90%	90%
Showcasing student/alumni stories and outcomes	76%	90%
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Promoting virtual or on-campus events	92%	98%
Promoting application and enrollment deadlines	94%	96%
Major, program, or department specific messaging	86%	95%
Showcasing student/alumni stories and outcomes	82%	90%
Brand messaging	96%	90%

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Measure the mix of channels to make sure you are getting the greatest ROI. Look at click-through rates as well as total response to find the optimal volume of students who will engage with your digital advertising.

Test offers and personalize them as much as possible. The more you can target messaging by area of study, relevant alumni or student stories, location, etc., the more likely students will respond and engage.

## USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

### Social media tools used to engage prospective students

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	2018 USED	2020 USED
Instagram	94%	95%
Facebook	93%	93%
YouTube	83%	78%
Twitter	89%	70%
LinkedIn	41%	49%
Snapchat	54%	32%
Pinterest	17%	4%

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	2018 USED	2020 USED
Instagram	79%	90%
Facebook	94%	88%
YouTube	72%	84%
Twitter	87%	80%
Snapchat	49%	52%
LinkedIn	26%	31%
Pinterest	6%	9%

## Social media use for college planning by high school and transfer students

	TRANSFER STUDENTS	HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Instagram	<b>44%</b>	<b>45%</b>
YouTube	<b>23%</b>	<b>41%</b>
Facebook	<b>28%</b>	<b>46%</b>
Twitter	<b>15%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Snapchat	<b>4%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Pinterest	<b>3%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
LinkedIn	<b>6%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
TikTok	<b>1%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Vimeo	<b>1%</b>	<b>N/A</b>

Sources: 2020 *E-Expectations of Transfer Students* and 2019 *E-Expectations Report*.

Note that in the 2019 report, we did not report on the use of Pinterest, LinkedIn, TikTok, or Vimeo because those numbers were very low among those high school respondents.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Focus on social media channels that are both popular and useful for the college search process. Channels such as Snapchat, while popular, may not be as used as much by students for researching colleges as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

Tailor social media for your student populations. The chart above shows differences in how transfer students and high school students use social media. This also applies to high school students and adult students looking to enroll in college, where a channel such as LinkedIn becomes more applicable.

## MAKE SURE YOUR STRATEGIES ALIGN WITH THE E-EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

See what college-bound high school students and transfer students revealed about their online behaviors in our E-Expectations reports.

Download them at [RuffaloNL.com/Expectations](https://RuffaloNL.com/Expectations)

## OUTREACH STRATEGIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS: EFFECTIVENESS AND USAGE

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	2018		2020	
	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Texting high school counselors	14%	60%	39%	73%
Meeting with high school counselors one-on-one	93%	94%	78%	91%
High school counselors' breakfasts and/ or meetings on campus	71%	94%	55%	85%
Email communication to high school counselors	87%	90%	44%	73%
Direct mail to high school counselors	70%	78%	42%	83%
Live or on-demand webcasts	N/A	N/A	6%	100%
Calling high school counselors after visits	59%	83%	81%	94%
Newsletter delivered over email	41%	69%	67%	93%
High school counselor area on website	53%	68%	38%	84%

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	2018		2020	
	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
High school counselor area on website	60%	75%	54%	88%
Email communication to high school counselors	96%	82%	92%	100%
Direct mail to high school counselors	77%	69%	73%	89%
Newsletter delivered over email	43%	75%	56%	89%
Calling high school counselors after visits	53%	92%	54%	77%
Texting high school counselors	9%	50%	15%	57%
Meeting with high school counselors one-on-one	96%	96%	77%	97%
High school counselors' breakfasts and/ or meetings on campus	79%	97%	85%	98%
Live or on-demand webcasts	N/A	N/A	46%	91%

### KEY TAKEAWAY

Campuses need to rethink how they engage high school counselors. In the post-pandemic world and an environment where counselors are dealing with many student issues beyond college search, it's key to make it easier and more convenient for counselors to interact with your institution. Webcasts (live and/or on-demand) are one example of how you can deliver an engaging experience that the counselor can experience more conveniently.

## ADMISSIONS EVENTS

These were the top 10 most effective admissions events and how many institutions use them.  
(Note: this research was conducted in fall 2020.)

Of 14 items measured, the following are **the top 10** most effective admissions events and their frequency of use.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Campus open house events	94%	100%
Campus visit days for high school students	85%	99%
Overnight campus visits and group campus visits by academic division or program	61%	98%
Weekend visit days	79%	97%
Special interest workshops, seminars, or camps (music, sports, science, etc.)	80%	93%
Off-campus group meetings for prospective students and/or their parents	67%	91%
Virtual visit days	81%	90%
Meetings of events for transfer students	83%	89%
Podcasts and webinars	66%	89%
College-paid trips to campus for prospective students	41%	89%

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Campus open house events	100%	98%
Campus visit days for high school students	100%	98%
Virtual visit days	94%	98%
Weekend visit days	79%	97%
Off-campus group meetings for prospective students and/or their parents	71%	97%
Meetings or events for high school counselors	92%	95%
Campus visit events designed for high school counselors	88%	95%
Meetings of events for transfer students	88%	95%
Special interest workshops, seminars, or camps (music, sports, science, etc.)	85%	93%
Podcasts and webinars	46%	91%

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Campuses have to find virtual ways to engage students and parents when many in-person activities are not feasible. It's critical to make sure that virtual tours, visits, meetings, and other activities are truly optimized for an online experience.

Keep in mind that an in-person/online hybrid approach to campus events may become the standard even after the pandemic passes. Students and families will want the flexibility of choosing between coming to campus for events and the option to experience some or all of those activities in virtual form.

## MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Respondents evaluated 20 operations, systems, and strategies that help them with their recruitment and marketing programs. Shown below are the **top 10 most effective strategies**.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Outsourcing of parent/family engagement of admitted and enrolled students	19%	100%
Systematically contacting admitted students to code their level of interest in enrolling at your institution ("qualifying admits")	76%	98%
Using a statistical, analytical approach to determine financial aid award levels by predicting enrollment rates based on award amounts ("financial aid leveraging")	72%	98%
Outsourcing print or electronic campaigns for student search	64%	98%
Communication and/or social platform to foster parent/family engagement of admitted and enrolled students	78%	97%
Search engine optimization	86%	96%
Admissions tracking to monitor and predict students' incremental rates of movement toward enrollment	70%	96%
Leveraging analytics (such as Google Analytics)	93%	95%
CRM	92%	95%
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of a prospective student enrolling at your institution	78%	95%

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Search engine optimization	19%	100%
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of a prospective student enrolling at your institution	76%	98%
Using a statistical, analytical approach to determine financial aid award levels by predicting enrollment rates based on award amounts (“ <i>financial aid leveraging</i> ”)	72%	98%
Systematically contacting admitted students to code their level of interest in enrolling at your institution (“ <i>qualifying admits</i> ”)	64%	98%
Systematically contacting inquiries to code their level of interest in enrolling at your institution (“ <i>qualifying inquiries</i> ”)	78%	97%
Outsourcing print, electronic campaigns, or other strategies to impact summer melt.	86%	96%
Outsourcing print, electronic campaigns, or other strategies to impact student yield	70%	96%
Outsourcing of parent/family engagement of admitted and enrolled students	93%	95%
CRM	92%	95%
Leveraging analytics (such as Google Analytics)	78%	95%

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Nearly all of the institutions using these practices rated them effective, yet many are also not using them. Be sure to explore solutions or strategies that can help you engage students and parents, especially digital solutions that can keep students engaged throughout the funnel.

Consider the ROI of outsourcing. As enrollment management increasingly relies on digital and statistical processes to be effective, it makes sense to work with firms that specialize in these solutions rather than try to do them yourself.

## RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES FOR UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS

Respondents were asked if they had strategies specifically for minority student populations and first-generation students.

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	YES, HAVE SPECIFIC STRATEGY	NO, NOT CURRENTLY CONSIDERING	NO, BUT CURRENTLY STUDYING STRATEGIES
Hispanic	31%	37%	32%
African American	29%	41%	29%
First-generation	34%	23%	42%

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	YES, HAVE SPECIFIC STRATEGY	NO, NOT CURRENTLY CONSIDERING	NO, BUT CURRENTLY STUDYING STRATEGIES
Hispanic	56%	33%	10%
African American	55%	30%	15%
First-generation	26%	11%	64%

### Recruitment communications in Spanish

SPANISH COMMUNICATION STRATEGY	PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
Have some type communications in Spanish	58%	66%
We currently don't have any recruitment materials in Spanish but are working on having them in the near future.	16%	18%
We don't have any recruitment materials in Spanish and are not planning having any in the near future.	26%	16%

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Campuses are missing opportunities to engage underrepresented students. As the student body becomes more ethnically diverse and increasing numbers of first-generation students look to attend college, campuses should have messaging and resources in place to help these students enroll and persist.

Promote how your campus climate is welcoming to a diverse student body. Support structures, messages from students and faculty, and examples of alumni success from students from these populations can help increase engagement.

Having materials in languages other than English can also be very helpful for first-generation students who may have parents/guardians who are non-English speakers.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

### Numbers of campuses that collect family contact information at the inquiry stage

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	YES
Email address for parents	58%
Mobile phone numbers for parents	33%
Mailing address for parents	39%
Do not collect any contact information for parents at the inquiry stage	21%
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	YES
Email address for parents	59%
Mobile phone numbers for parents	34%
Mailing address for parents	34%
Do not collect any contact information for parents at the inquiry stage	27%

### Prospective family engagement via social media

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	USE TO ENGAGE PROSPECTIVE PARENTS
Facebook	65%
Instagram	31%
Twitter	28%
YouTube	32%
Snapchat	3%
LinkedIn	9%
Pinterest	0%

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	USE TO ENGAGE PROSPECTIVE PARENTS
Facebook	74%
Instagram	33%
Twitter	26%
YouTube	23%
Snapchat	7%
LinkedIn	14%
Pinterest	0%

### Institutions that have a website/website area for prospective families



### Information posted on prospective family's website/website area

PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	USED
Phone number to admissions team	95%
Information about cost	90%
Information about academics (majors and minors)	90%
Email links to connect with admissions/financial aid	90%
Residential life/housing information	90%
Campus calendar	86%
Admission requirements	81%
Information about employment outcomes	81%
Email links to connect with other administrators	81%
Financial aid -scholarships	76%
Information request form	76%
Visit scheduling form	76%
Career services	76%

## PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

### USED

Career services	76%
Orientation schedule	76%
Financial aid/scholarship calculator	71%
Alumni information	71%
Application form	67%
Virtual tour	62%
Information specific to transfer students	62%
Information about athletics	57%
Email links to connect with faculty	38%
Live chat	29%

## PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

### USED

Information about cost	100%
Email links to connect with admissions/financial aid	100%
Admission requirements	95%
Financial aid -scholarships	95%
Phone number to admissions team	95%
Financial aid/scholarship calculator	90%
Residential life/housing information	90%
Information about academics (majors and minors)	86%
Visit scheduling form	86%
Virtual tour	86%
Information about employment outcomes	81%
Career services	81%
Email links to connect with other administrators	76%
Information request form	71%
Campus calendar	71%

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	USED
Orientation schedule	71%
Information specific to transfer students	67%
Application form	62%
Email links to connect with faculty	57%
Alumni information	57%
Information about athletics	48%
Live chat	33%

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Keep parents engaged at all stages of the funnel. They are usually the biggest enrollment influencers with students, yet 40 percent of institutions are not collecting email addresses for them at the inquiry stage and 60 percent are not collecting mobile numbers.

Optimize your parent engagement for mobile outreach. Text messaging, video, and mobile-responsive emails tailored for parents will help you deliver compelling messages right to their phones.

## HOW CAN YOU OPTIMIZE YOUR MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES? TALK TO OUR EXPERTS

Reach out to us today and set up a time to talk. Our experts can discuss:

- Generating more leads through digital marketing.
- Personalized engagement with students and parents.
- Targeting and engaging the prospective students who are the right fit for your institution.
- Boosting enrollment yields by maintaining engagement throughout the funnel.
- Increasing ROI for your marketing and recruiting activities.

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## ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS AND METHODOLOGY

Data in this report reflect responses from 151 colleges and universities. Respondents participated in the RNL national electronic poll of undergraduate practices for marketing and student recruitment in the fall of 2020. The poll was emailed to enrollment and admissions officers at accredited, degree granting institutions across the United States. Respondents to the poll included 95 four-year private institutions, 56 four-year public institutions.

To report the findings as accurately as possible, the rankings of effectiveness were based only on the relative effectiveness options that were given to respondents: “effective” (responses of “very effective” or “somewhat effective”), and “not effective.” This approach of excluding “practice not used,” allowed promising, less-frequently-used practices to be included.

### FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE PARTICIPANTS

Alfred University (NY)	Dallas Christian College (TX)
American University (D.C.)	Davenport University (MI)
Arcadia University (PA)	Divine Mercy University (VA)
Augustana University (SD)	East West College of Natural Medicine (FL)
Austin College (TX)	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University-Prescott (AZ)
Bethel University (TN)	Emerson College (MA)
Bradley University (IL)	Erikson Institute (IL)
Brenau University (GA)	Erskine College (SC)
Bridgewater College (VA)	Gardner-Webb University (NC)
Butler University (IN)	Georgetown University (D.C.)
Cabrini University (PA)	Goucher College (MD)
California Institute of the Arts (CA)	Hardin-Simmons University (TX)
Carolina College of Biblical Studies (NC)	Holy Names University (CA)
Central Christian College of Kansas (KS)	Houghton College (NY)
Central College (IA)	Huntington University (IN)
Claflin University (SC)	Illinois College (IL)
Clarkson College (NE)	Indiana Wesleyan University-Marion (IN)
College for Creative Studies (MI)	Judson University (IL)
College of Saint Benedict (MN)	Keystone College (PA)
College of Saint Elizabeth (NJ)	Lake Forest College (IL)
Concordia University Texas (TX)	Lawrence University (WI)
Converse College (SC)	Lewis University (IL)
Cornell College (IA)	Lindenwood University (MO)

### *Four-Year Private Institutions (cont.)*

Linfield College-McMinnville Campus (OR)	Southwest Baptist University-Main campus (MO)
Loyola University New Orleans (LA)	Southwest Baptist University-Springfield campus (MO)
Marquette University (WI)	Southwestern Adventist University (TX)
Marquette University (WI)	Southwestern University (TX)
Moody Bible Institute (IL)	Sterling College (VT)
Mount Aloysius College (PA)	Susquehanna University (PA)
Neumann University (PA)	Sweet Briar College (VA)
Northwest University (WA)	Trinity Bible College and Graduate School (ND)
Ohio Christian University (OH)	Trocaire College (NY)
Ohio Northern University (OH)	University of Puget Sound (WA)
Ozark Christian College (MO)	University of Scranton (PA)
Pacific Northwest College of Art (OR)	Utica College (NY)
Pacific University (OR)	Valparaiso University (IN)
Piedmont College (GA)	Webster University (MO)
Point Loma Nazarene University (CA)	Whitman College (WA)
Presbyterian College (SC)	Wilkes University (PA)
Providence College (RI)	William Jessup University (CA)
Regis University (CO)	Worcester Polytechnic Institute (MA)
Roberts Wesleyan College (NY)	Xavier University of Louisiana (LA)
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology (IN)	
Saint Anselm College (NH)	
Saint John Fisher College (NY)	
Saint Leo University (FL)	
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (IN)	
Santa Clara University (CA)	
Seton Hill University (PA)	
Southeastern University (FL)	
Southern Adventist University (TN)	
Southern Methodist University (TX)	
Southern Nazarene University (OK)	

## FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS

Arkansas Tech University (AK)	SUNY College at Oswego (NY)
Boise State University (ID)	Texas State University (TX)
Central Michigan University (MI)	Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center-El Paso (TX)
Dixie State University (UT)	The University of Alabama (AL)
East Tennessee State University (TN)	University of Akron Main Campus (OH)
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania (PA)	University of Baltimore (MD)
Elizabeth City State University (NC)	University of California-Irvine (CA)
Fashion Institute of Technology (NY)	University of Central Missouri (MO)
Florida Southwestern State College (FL)	University of Cincinnati-Main Campus (OH)
Illinois State University (IL)	University of Idaho (ID)
Indiana University of Pennsylvania-Main Campus (PA)	University of Kentucky (KY)
James Madison University (VA)	University of Louisville (KY)
Kennesaw State University (GA)	University of Nebraska at Kearney (NE)
Metropolitan State University (MN)	University of Nebraska at Omaha (NE)
Middle Tennessee State University (TN)	University of New Hampshire-Main Campus (NH)
Missouri State University-Springfield (MO)	University of Oregon (OR)
Montana State University (MT)	University of Waterloo, Ontario (Canada)
Montclair State University (NJ)	University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh (WI)
New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJ)	University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (WI)
New Mexico State University-Main Campus (NM)	University of Wisconsin-Whitewater (WI)
Northern Kentucky University (KY)	Western Illinois University (IL)
Northern Vermont University (VT)	Western Kentucky University (KY)
Oakland University (MI)	Western Washington University (WA)
Ohio State University-Lima Campus (OH)	Wichita State University (KS)
Ohio State University-Marion Campus (OH)	
Portland State University (OR)	
Pueblo Community College (CO)	
Purdue University Fort Wayne (IN)	
South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (SD)	
South Dakota State University (SD)	
Southern Utah University (UT)	
St. Mary's College of Maryland (MD)	

## ABOUT THE RESEARCH SPONSOR

### About RNL

RNL is the leading provider of higher education enrollment, student success, and fundraising solutions. The firm serves more than 1,900 colleges and universities through data-driven solutions focused on the entire lifecycle of enrollment and fundraising, assuring students find the right program, graduate on time, secure their first job in their chosen field, and give back to support the next generation. With a deep knowledge of the industry, RNL provides institutions the ability to scale their efforts by tapping into a community of support and resources.

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